



## USDA Proposed Rule on SNAP Work Requirements

### *What is it?*

On February 1<sup>st</sup>, the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) agency of the United States Division of Agriculture (USDA) issued a proposed rule that would make changes to the current work requirements within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

### *What does it propose to do?*

- Under current SNAP rules, in areas of high unemployment or limited job opportunities, states have the ability to waive requirements that certain adults be employed or enrolled in job training programs for at least 20 hours per week in order to continue receiving SNAP benefits.
- The proposed regulation restricts the waivers, limiting a state's ability to address the specific employment circumstances in particular communities.

### *Who would it affect?*

- The rule focuses on a population known as Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs).
- "ABAWDs" are veterans, the homeless, those re-entering the workforce after incarceration, caretakers, recent high school graduates seeking a job, former foster care youth, individuals with undiagnosed mental illness, and other adults who want to work, but are unemployed or underemployed.
- Most people on SNAP who are capable of working are in fact working. Some, however, are unable to find work for reasons out of their control.

### *What is the impact?*

- Last year, 62 Massachusetts communities qualified for a waiver from these rules. It is likely that none of these waivers would be available under the new rules.
- The proposed changes would cause serious harm to over 755,000 unemployed and underemployed adults who receive SNAP under the current rules—18,000 in Massachusetts alone.
- Loss of waivers means:
  - Loss of food assistance for some of the most vulnerable SNAP recipients at a time when they need it most.
  - Reduced support for local farmers and retailers by reducing the number of SNAP dollars spent locally.
  - Changes to a critical program made by the administration in a move designed to circumvent Congress, which resoundingly rejected stricter SNAP work requirements when they were debated in the Farm Bill.

#### **PROJECT BREAD** THE WALK FOR HUNGER

145 Border Street  
East Boston, MA 02128-1903  
[www.projectbread.org](http://www.projectbread.org)

617.723.5000 **T**  
617.248.8877 **F**  
[info@projectbread.org](mailto:info@projectbread.org)